Welcome to the first newsletter from the UCF Office of the General Counsel. For those of you who I haven’t had the opportunity to meet, I am Youndy Cook, and I am the Interim Vice President and General Counsel for UCF. I have been with UCF for 19 years, most recently in the role of Senior Deputy General Counsel. It has been an honor to step into the Interim General Counsel role, and I look forward to working with you to continue to advance the best interests of the University and provide superior customer service to the departments and colleges of the university.

To those of you who recently participated in a survey about the Office of the General Counsel, we thank you for your participation. It is important for us to understand how we are serving you and where we can improve. While the satisfaction rating was very high overall, there were a few areas we noted as areas of improvement. One area of improvement noted was the desire to provide general updates or information related to your areas of work. Some of you also told us that you were unaware of certain services the office provides or were unsure of whom to contact for services.

This newsletter is the first initiative of many to help remedy these concerns. Inside you will find a few short articles updating you on changes in the law that may impact your work or short overviews of legal topics of interest. There is also a very brief overview of each attorney on the UCF Legal team, including their practice areas and general contact information. You can also find updates on our website at https://generalcounsel.ucf.edu/. Updates to the website are coming soon, so check back frequently.

I look forward to the repopulation of campus so I can begin meeting with you face to face. Whether in person or virtually, please know that our office is here to support you. Until then, Go Knights and Charge On!

Youndy Cook
Interim Vice President and General Counsel
Email: Youndy.Cook@ucf.edu

Practice Areas:
• Conflicts of Interest,
• Compliance,
• Constitutional Issues,
• Crisis and Emergency Management,
• Employment and Labor,
• FERPA,
• Governance,
• Government Relations,
• Insurance,
• Litigation,
• Public Safety,
• Public Records,
• Regulations,
• Risk Management,
• Student Affairs

Staff Spotlight: Kalyn and Kaseema
Our Public Records and Subpoena specialists

Kalyn is our new Legal Services Coordinator who will be handling public records. In her previous role from the Florida Department of Transportation as a Litigation Paralegal Specialist, she worked on public records requests as well as special issues and litigation with the Sunpass system. She holds a B.A. in Latin American and Iberian Studies and a JD from Barry University Dwayne Andres School of Law.

Kaseema is our Legal Assistant, and she has been working in the UCF Office of the General Counsel for 13 years. She handles subpoena requests. Kaseema holds a B.A. in Human Resource Management.
Meet the Attorneys

Sherry Andrews
Associate General Counsel, Associate Provost
Email: sandrews@ucf.edu
Practice Areas: Academic Affairs, Constitutional Issues, Contracts (academic affairs), Collective Bargaining, Employment and Labor, Faculty Issues

Jennifer Cerasa
Legal Counsel, UCF Foundation, Senior Associate General Counsel
Email: Jennifer.Cerasa@ucf.edu
Practice Areas: Alumni, Contracts (Foundation, gifts), Development, Finance, Governance, Health Safety and Environment, Investments, Legacy Pointe/CCRC Development Corp, Policies, Public Records (Foundation), Real Estate, Student Affairs, UCF Foundation

Jordan Clark
Associate General Counsel
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Practice Areas: Athletics, Contracts (athletics, construction, procurement), Facilities and Construction, Finance, Health Safety and Environment, Litigation, Public Safety, Procurement/Purchasing, Real Estate, Student Affairs, UCFAA, UCF Convocation Corporation, UCF Stadium Corporation

Natasha Hellerich
Associate General Counsel
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Shainoor Ladha-Karmali
Associate General Counsel, College of Medicine; HIPAA Privacy Officer
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Practice Areas: College of Medicine, Academic Health Services Center, Compliance (HIPAA, healthcare), Contracts (COM), Graduate Medical Education, HIPAA and Health Law, Privacy and Information Security

Sara Potter
Associate General Counsel
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Practice Areas: Academic Affairs, Clery Act, Constitutional Issues, Contracts (academic affairs), Collective Bargaining, Discrimination and Retaliation, Employment and Labor, Faculty Issues, Insurance, Litigation, Student Affairs, Title IX

Jeanette Schreiber
Chief Legal Officer and Associate Vice President for Medical Affairs
Email: Jeanette.Schreiber@ucf.edu
Practice Areas: CFCPO, College of Medicine, Academic Health Services Center, Governance (health sciences), Graduate Medical Education, Healthcare Initiatives and Partnerships, HIPAA and Health Law, Public Records (COM), Self-Insurance Program, UCF Academic Health

Sandra Sovinski
Deputy General Counsel, Office of Research
Email: Sandra.Sovinski@ucf.edu
Practice Areas: Compliance (research), Contracts (research), Copyrights, Export Control, Intellectual Property, Licensing, Patents, Public Records (research), Research, Sponsored Research, Technology Transfer, Trademarks, UCF Research Foundation

Robert Wilson
Associate General Counsel
Email: Robert.Wilson@ucf.edu
Practice Areas: Compliance (research), Contracts (research, IRB), Export Control, Intellectual Property, Licensing, Limbitless Solutions, Inc., Public Records (research), Research, Sponsored Research, Tax, Technology Transfer, UCF Research Foundation

Areas of Practice

• Litigation and other contested matters
• Administrative investigations and hearings
• Student Affairs
• Data Privacy
• Health Care and HIPAA
• Real Estate and Construction
• Technology Transfer
• Intellectual Property
• Regulations
• Transactions
• Securities and Finance
• Gifts and Tax
• Subpoenas
• Public Records
• Personnel Issues
• Governance and Procedure
E-Verify and Contracts

As of January 1, 2021, Section 448.095, Florida Statutes requires that every public employer (which includes UCF), contractor, and subcontractor registers and uses the E-Verify system to verify the work authorization status of all newly hired employees. A public employer, contractor, or subcontractor may not enter into a contract unless each party to the contract registers with and uses the E-Verify system.

The E-Verify system is an Internet-based system operated by the United States Department of Homeland Security that allows participating employers, such as UCF, to electronically verify the employment eligibility of newly hired employees. The goal of this law is to make sure that only individuals who are lawfully present and legally residing in the U.S. and who are allowed to work here at the time of employment are performing services or providing labor or supplies to UCF (and other entities subject to the statute).

A contractor under this section is defined as a person or entity that has entered into and plans to enter into a contract with UCF to provide labor, supplies, or services to UCF in exchange for salary, wages, or other remuneration.

The law required an update to many of the templates approved by the Office of the General Counsel which are located on the General Counsel’s website, and it may also require the addition of language to your department’s contracts. Please contact Natasha Hellerich if you have any questions about the applicability of this law to your department or contract.

Lease Updates

Florida law was updated last year to remove the requirement that a commercial or residential property lease must have two witnesses in order to be valid. Witnesses were originally required to prevent fraud or forgery of a lease. If a lease was later challenged as invalid, witnesses could verify the legitimacy of the signatures. With the prevalence of electronic signatures, obtaining witnesses has become a burdensome and arguable unnecessary process. Removal of witnesses is a welcome change to lessen administrative burden when executing leases. For other legal questions related to leases, please contact Jennifer Cerasa or Jordan Clark.

Resource Reminder

The Office of the General Counsel’s website https://generalcounsel.ucf.edu/ offers helpful information and resources to provide access to additional resources applicable to university operations.

Visit our “Legal Services” page for information on Contracts. Information such as “The Top 10 Contracts Issues Overview” can be found on that page. Visit our “Legal Issues” page for helpful information on Copyrights and Fair Use, as well as FERPA.
Legislative Update / House Bill 233

HB 233 was adopted this legislative session. To assess the status of intellectual freedom and viewpoint diversity on the state university and state college campuses, HB 233 requires the State Board of Education (SBE) and Board of Governors (BOG) to select or create a survey to be administered annually by all Florida state colleges and universities. Beginning September 1, 2022, the results of this survey are to be compiled by the SBE and the BOG, respectively, and published each September. Additionally, to encourage intellectual freedom and viewpoint diversity, the bill prohibits the SBE, the BOG, state colleges and universities from shielding students, faculty, or staff from protected free speech.

The bill authorizes the audio and video recording, for specified purposes, of class lectures at Florida’s public institutions of higher education. The bill further provides that faculty research, lectures, writings, and commentary, whether published or unpublished, are protected expressive activities. Any person injured by the unauthorized publishing of video and audio can seek civil remedy, including injunctive relief and damages.

Providing further protections for students, the bill requires that state university student government associations provide elected or appointed officers a direct appeal, with no conditions precedent, to a senior university administrator of any discipline, suspension, or removal from office. Furthermore, all state colleges and universities are required to adopt student codes of conduct that meet a set of minimum due process protections.

Compliance with the provisions of this bill will involve a number of different groups across the University, and these groups are already working to update policies and regulations as needed. The Office of the General Counsel will support these efforts.

UCF Health Sciences HIPAA Collaborative Taskforce

The Office of General Counsel Health Affairs is leading the efforts of implementation of uniform HIPAA Privacy and Security policies for all health care units and their supporting units at the university. We formed a university-wide task force called the UCF Health Sciences HIPAA Collaborative, to include representation from the various departments and colleges at the university. We asked each stakeholder to identify individuals who have the responsibility for HIPAA compliance at their site and invited them to join the task force. We received an overwhelming response, and over time, the task force has grown to include others who have wished to participate. Our current membership is at about 50 members, comprised from the following units: College of Medicine/UCF Health, UCF Student Health Services, Counseling and Psychological Services, College of Health Professions and Sciences, Psychology Department, UCF Foundation, Office of General Counsel/Health Affairs Division, UCF Information Technology, Information Security, Office of Research, UCF Compliance, Ethics and Risk, UCF Audit and UCF RESTORES. The policies are developed in collaboration with the UCF Information Security Office and HealthIT at the College of Medicine. The group meets several times a year to review and discuss the draft policies and the input from the group is incorporated in the policies as appropriate. To date the group has reviewed and finalized 42 policies and continues to meet and work on this initiative.
## Contact Us

**Main Office**  
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